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ABSTRACT

The responses of freshman samples from 1973 (N=2407) and 1974 (N=1492) to the University of Maryland Census are described and compared. Results indicated: (1) A greater percentage of freshmen in the 1974 sample was found to be living on campus in a resident hall or Greek house. Of the entering students who commuted to school, a greater percentage of the 1974 sample was found to live closer to campus; (2) In both 1973 and 1974 men, more than women, were attending the University to gain skills directly applicable to a career, or a direction for career or life's work. Women, on the other hand, were more frequently attending Maryland to develop independent thinking and behavior; (3) Fewer of the 1974 freshmen expected to hold part-time jobs during the school year; however, the working students from both samples expected to be working about the same amount of time per week and earning about the same amount of money; (4) In both the 1973 and 1974 samples, women were more frequently found to be concerned about racism and more willing to take active steps to learn about and mollify racism at the university. (MJM)

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A COMPARISON OF UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND FRESHMAN PROFILES, 1973-1974

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SUMMARY

The responses of freshman samples from 1973 (N=2407) and 1974 (N=1492) to the University Census (USC) are described and compared. Some of the results are provided below (percentages provided in the text):

Demographic and Family Characteristics: A greater percentage of freshmen in the 1974 sample was found to be living on campus in a residence hall or Greek house. Of the entering students who commuted to school, a greater percentage of the 1974 sample was found to live closer to campus. In both samples fathers were most frequently reported as the greatest influence on students' decision to attend college. More fathers than mothers of students from both samples were reported to have less than a high school diploma; however, a higher percentage of fathers than mothers was also reported to have college degrees. Parents of the 1974 freshmen were reported to have more formal education than was reported for parents of the 1973 freshmen.

Educational Attitudes and Objectives: In both 1973 and 1974 men, more than women, were attending the University to gain (1) skills directly applicable to a career, or (2) a direction for career or life's work. Women, on the other hand, were more frequently attending Maryland to develop independent thinking and behavior. In both samples men were found to be more aspiring than women in terms of their educational goals.

Employment: Fewer of the 1974 freshmen expected to hold part-time jobs during the school year; however, the working students from both samples expected to be working about the same amount of time per week and earning about the same amount of money.

Social Attitudes: In both the 1973 and 1974 samples women were more frequently found to be concerned about racism and more willing to take active steps to learn about and mollify racism at the University. Men were found to be more concerned about ecology and pollution than women.

The data from the 1974 sample was also compiled according to the colleges in which students were enrolled. Instances in which responses of students in particular colleges are discrepant with the responses of the general sample are also reported.

Each summer the Research Unit of the Counseling Center administers the University Student Census (USC) to a sample of entering freshmen. This instrument has been designed to provide a profile of incoming students' attitudes and characteristics on several demographic, educational and social variables. This report gives a profile of the 1974 freshmen and, where possible[1], compares them with the 1973 freshmen. Throughout the report percentages in many cases do not add to 100% due to rounding and to students' marking "Other" on some items. Differences between male and female responses can be assumed similar unless specifically reported.

The 1974 sample consisted of 1,492 freshmen, of which 53% were female and 47% male. The entire entering class numbers approximately 5417 students; their mean SAT scores were 466 Verbal and 508 Math. The class's approximate racial composition is 7% Black, 1% Native American, 2% Oriental, 1% Spanish surnamed, 76% white, and 13% race unspecified.[2]

The 1973 sample consisted of 2,407 students (51% female, 49% male). Approximately 4600 new freshmen were enrolled in the University in Fall 1973 - about 15% were Black, 1% Native American, 2% Oriental, 2% Spanish surnamed, and 80% White. Their mean SAT scores were 493 Verbal and 531 Math. Five percent of the 1973 sample were veterans of the U. S. Armed Forces while only 1% of the 1974 sample had served in this capacity.

Demographic and Family Characteristics

Over half (57%) of the 1974 sample reported that they would be living on campus in a residence hall or Greek house; this compares with 35% of the 1973 freshmen. About one third (32%) of the 1974 freshmen live with their parents (1973: 46%) and 7% live in an off-campus room, apartment, or house. Of the commuting freshmen in the 1974 sample, 52% live within ten miles of campus and 32% live between 11 and 50 miles from campus. In 1973 the corresponding percentages were 43% and 37%. Forty percent of the 1974 class had resided in one or more foreign countries or states other than Maryland during the five years prior to entering the University.

In both 1973 and 1974 students most frequently reported their fathers to be the greatest influence in their decision to enter college (1973: 38% 1974: 36%); mothers were the second most frequent choice (1973: 26%; 1974: 19%). There were also significant sex differences in the responses to this item (See Table 1); again, this was consistent for both years. The students who indicated "father" were more frequently male (1973: males 44%, females 32%; 1974: males 43%, females 31%), while the students who indicated "mother" were more often female (1973: males 21%, females 32%; 1974: males 13%, females 25%). As the percentages also suggest, mothers were apparently much less influential for the more recent sample.

[1]The USC has been revised and as a result only 22 of 56 items on the 1973 USC were repeated in 1974

[2]As reported by Cultural Study Center unit of Data Center.

More fathers than mothers in both the 1973 and 1974 samples had college degrees (1973: fathers 45%, mothers 22%; 1974: fathers 48%, mothers 25%); however, fathers were also more often reported to have less than a high school diploma (1973: fathers 11%, mothers 9%; 1974: fathers 8%, mothers 6%). These data (See Tables 2 and 3) further suggest that the parents of the 1974 freshmen have more formal education than the 1973 freshmen.

In the 1974 sample 39% of the students reported that they were the first child in their family to enter college; 33% reported that they were second, 15% third, and 8% forth or more.

Educational Attitudes and Objectives

Most of the 1974 freshmen saw the major function of the University as providing a general learning facility (44%), although more than a third (36%) regarded the development of students' personal and social skills as the major function. Only one percent of the students ranked the training and development of researchers as a first priority.

In both 1973 and 1974 identical proportions of the samples (61%) indicated that they are attending the University to gain (1) skills directly applicable to a career, or (2) a direction for career or life's work. However, in both years this was more the case with men than women (males 66%, females 56%) while women were more frequently attending Maryland to develop independent thinking and behavior (1973: males 9%, females 14%; 1974: males 12%, females 17%).

There was again a consistency across the two samples in regard to the sources that students identified as contributing most to their development. Only a small number of students (1973: 6%; 1974: 7%) felt that their contact with teachers had contributed most to their development during the previous year. Social life (1973: 22%; 1974: 26%), friendships (1973: 22%; 1974: 20%), and job experience (1973: 15%; 1974: 19%) were more often seen as the significant developmental influence.

A slightly larger proportion of the 1973 sample agreed that the University of Maryland was their first choice school (1973: 59%; 1974: 55%). The most popular reasons for attending Maryland were the same for both years: because it offers the kind of program desired (1973: 28%; 1974: 35%), because of its geographical location (1973, 1974: 23%), or because of its relatively low cost (1973: 24%; 1974: 22%). Appreciably smaller percentages of students indicated other reasons: friends or relatives previously or currently attend (1973: 7%; 1974: 6%), not accepted elsewhere (1973: 3%; 1974: 2%), at a high school counselor's or teacher's suggestion (1973: 1%; 1974: 2%). A greater proportion of the 1974 sample expected that there would be many facilites and opportunities for individual creative activities on campus (1973: 79%; 1974: 87%). Freshmen from both years saw the most difficult adjustments to college as studying efficiently (1973: 27%; 1974: 22%), budgeting time wisely (1973: 15%; 1974: 20%), and selecting a major or career (1973: 13%; 1974: 12%).

Fifty-four percent of the 1974 sample and 45% of the 1973 sample reported that the necessity of an undergraduate degree for further education or for their chosen occupation would be the primary reason for their staying at Maryland

and finishing degree requirements. Sixteen percent of the 1973 freshmen and 13% of the 1974 freshmen wanted to complete their college education primarily because college graduates get better jobs.

Freshmen in the 1974 sample were asked what they expected to be doing four years from the time that they were polled. Most (75%) felt that they will have graduated from Maryland, although some students expected to still be in attendance (7%), to have transferred to another institution (13%), and to have dropped out of college (1%). More men expect to still be in attendance (males 10%, females 5%), while more women expect to have transferred to another institution (males 12%, females 15%).

In both year's samples there were sex differences with regard to students' degree aspirations (See Table 4). Many more women planned to terminate their education with a bachelor's degree (1973: males 29%, females 42%; 1974: males 27%, females 41%). This difference was relatively small for a Master's degree (1973: males 23%, females 26%; 1974: males 30%, females 33%) and in the opposite direction for doctoral academic (Ed.D., Ph.D.) and professional (D.D.S., M.D., J.D.) degrees (1973: males 32%, females 20%; 1974: males 37%, females 21%).

The freshmen in the 1974 sample were asked to select the one factor most important in their long-term career choices. The most popular reasons were an intrinsic interest in the field (22%), a desire to work with people (17%) and a desire to make an important contribution to society (15%).

Employment

Only 8% of the 1974 freshmen had no earned income from the previous year (males 4%, females 11%). Of those students who had been employed, there was a substantial difference in earnings between males and females. The modal income for men was $1,000 to $2,999 (males 36%, females 19%), while that for women was $100 to $499 (males 23%, females 32%). Seventy-six percent of the 1973 sample (males 77%, females 73%) and 66% of the 1974 sample expected to have a part-time job during the school year. In both years students most frequently expected to work between 10 and 19 hours each week (1973: 20%; 1974: 18%). The weekly income most frequently anticipated by working students was between twenty and forty dollars (1973: 18%; 1974: 19%).

Social Attitudes

While 1974 freshmen most often regarded the economy (28%) as the most pressing social issue, the 1973 freshmen did not rank it among their three top concerns. Students from the 1973 sample regarded ecology (1973: 31%; 1974: 19%), racism (1973: 18%; 1974: 17%), and the integrity of those with power (1973: 11%; 1974: 15%) as most in need of attention. In both years more women than men were concerned most with racism (1973: males 15%, females 21%; 1974: males 15%, females 20%) while more men than women were most concerned with ecology (1973: males 33%, females 29%; 1974: males 21%, females 17%).

Most students in both 1973 and 1974 thought that the best way for the State of Maryland to provide higher education for both blacks and whites was

to let things happen naturally (1973: 36%; 1974: 38%). In both years this approach was supported more by men than by women (1973: males 38%, females 35%; 1974: males 41%, females 36%). The proposal second most supported by both samples was the improvement of the State's predominantly black colleges (1973: 19%; 1974: 25%). Females, more than males, in both 1973 and 1974 thought that the University should actively recruit black students (1973: males 22%, females 31%; 1974: males 22%, females 27%). In a fashion similar to their responses to other racial items, women more than men agreed that they expected to take a black studies course while at Maryland (1973: males 13%, females 22%; 1974: males 12%, females 17%). Fifteen percent of the 1973 sample and 18% of the 1974 sample expected to take a women's studies course at Maryland (1973: males 4%, females 26%; 1974: males 3%, females 33%). Approximately half of the students in both samples agreed that the University should use its influence to improve social conditions in the State (1973: 52%; 1974: 49%).

The 1973 freshmen (54%) thought that the best way for the State to provide higher educational facilities for physically handicapped students was to have special facilities and services on one particular campus. Only 17% of the 1974 sample supported that approach while 67% thought that the State should provide special facilities and services on all campuses (1973: 15%).

College Discrepancies with the General Sample

The data from the 1974 sample was compiled according to the colleges in which students were enrolled. These were Agriculture (3%), Education (6%), Engineering (6%), Home Economics (3%), Nursing (4%), Physical Education, Recreation, and Health (1%), Pharmacy (1%), Architecture (1%), Allied Health (8%), General Studies (3%), Journalism (1%), and Intensive Educational Development Program (IED, 6%). Over half of the sample (55%) was either in Arts and Sciences or had not declared a major. An attempt has been made to compare the responses of students in various colleges with the response characteristics of the total sample; however, in several instances small N's have made such comparisons unfeasible. Therefore, the following comparisons include only those colleges that comprised at least 3% of the total sample.

Educational Attitudes and Objectives

While most students saw the University's major function as providing a general learning facility, Education (44%) and Nursing (49%) students most frequently saw the development of people's personal and social skills as most important.

Students from Allied Health (24%) most often saw their mothers rather than their fathers as most influential in their decision to enter college.

Home Economics students (18%) saw meeting and getting to know other students as their most difficult adjustment to college. This concern ranked fifth for the entire sample.

Job experience was the third most frequently cited developmental influence for the 1974 sample as a whole; however, IED (34%) and Agriculture (27%) students ranked it first.

General Studies (52%) was the only program in which more students disagreed than agreed to the statement that the University of Maryland was their first choice of school.

Unlike the general sample, which most often reported "intrinsic interest in the field" as the most significant factor in long-term career choice, IED students most frequently made this decision on the basis of job openings and the possibility of rapid advancement, and Allied Health (42%) and Nursing (40%) students on the basis of a desire to work with people.

Social Attitudes

General Studies students (66%), more than the general sample (49%), were in agreement with the University's using its influence to improve social conditions in the State.

Nursing (30%) and Home Economics (35%) students were more often in agreement to taking a women's studies course (general sample 18%).

Table 1

Mother's and Father's Influence on the Decision to Attend College

	1973		1974	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Male	21%	44%	13%	43%
Female	32%	32%	25%	31%
Total	26%	38%	19%	36%

Table 2

Percentage of Parents with College Degrees

	1973	1974
Mother	22%	25%
Father	45%	48%

Table 3

Percentage of Parents with
less than a High School Diploma

	1973	1974
Mother	9%	6%
Father	11%	8%

Table 4

Freshmen Degree Aspirations

	1973		1974	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
B.A.	29%	42%	27%	41%
M.A.	23%	26%	30%	33%
Ed.D., Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.D.S.	32%	20%	37%	21%